

# Explosion Beirut

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Direktion für Entwicklung  
und Zusammenarbeit DEZA

## Facts & Figures

### Context

The explosion at the port of Beirut destroyed more than 5,000 buildings and claimed around 200 lives. More than 6,000 people have been injured in the blast while 300,000 lost their homes.\*

### SDC engagement

So far, 31 experts of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) as well as employees of Swiss Humanitarian Aid have been deployed to Lebanon.

### Focus of Swiss Action

Health, education, shelter, building inspection.

### Contributions

Direct action  
Health (CHF 2 million)

Direct action  
Education (CHF 1.5 – 2 million)

Lebanese Red Cross  
(CHF 0.5 million)

International Federation of  
Red Cross and Red Crescent  
Societies  
(CHF 0.5 million)

**Total CHF 4.5 – 5 million**

\*UNFPA Situation Report 12.8. 2020



Swiss Hazmat expert searching the site for toxic substances in conversation with an expert of the UN ©SDC

## Current situation

On 4 August 2020 at 6pm local time, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded at the port of Beirut. Around 200 people were killed and more than 6,000 injured in the blast. The detonation triggered a pressure wave that caused huge destruction in the immediate surroundings of the port. Public buildings including 120 schools and several hospitals have also been damaged or destroyed. The public health system which is already struggling with the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic is stretched to deal with the high number of people injured in the blast.

## SDC engagement

Within less than 40 hours after the blast, Swiss Humanitarian Aid dispatched experts of its Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA). The deployed construction engineers, psychologists, architects as well as medical personnel supported the Swiss embassy in Beirut in assessing the humanitarian situation in the city. In close cooperation with the municipal administration and the United Nations, Swiss experts inspected more than 80 public buildings and examined whether they had suffered any structural damage. One Swiss expert supported the local authorities in examining the port for dangerous substances and assessing the environmental impact of the explosion. With support of the Lebanese authorities and the Swiss embassy, the experts determined the priorities of the response whereby the highest importance was given to shelter and health. On Saturday, 8 August a second team of nine medical experts and building surveyors was deployed to Beirut. The SDC has also supported Lebanon under the umbrella of the regional cooperation programme to meet the needs originating from the Syria crisis.

After conducting an in-depth needs analysis, the following two action lines for humanitarian assistance were defined:



SHA expert assessing a building ©SDC

### Health sector

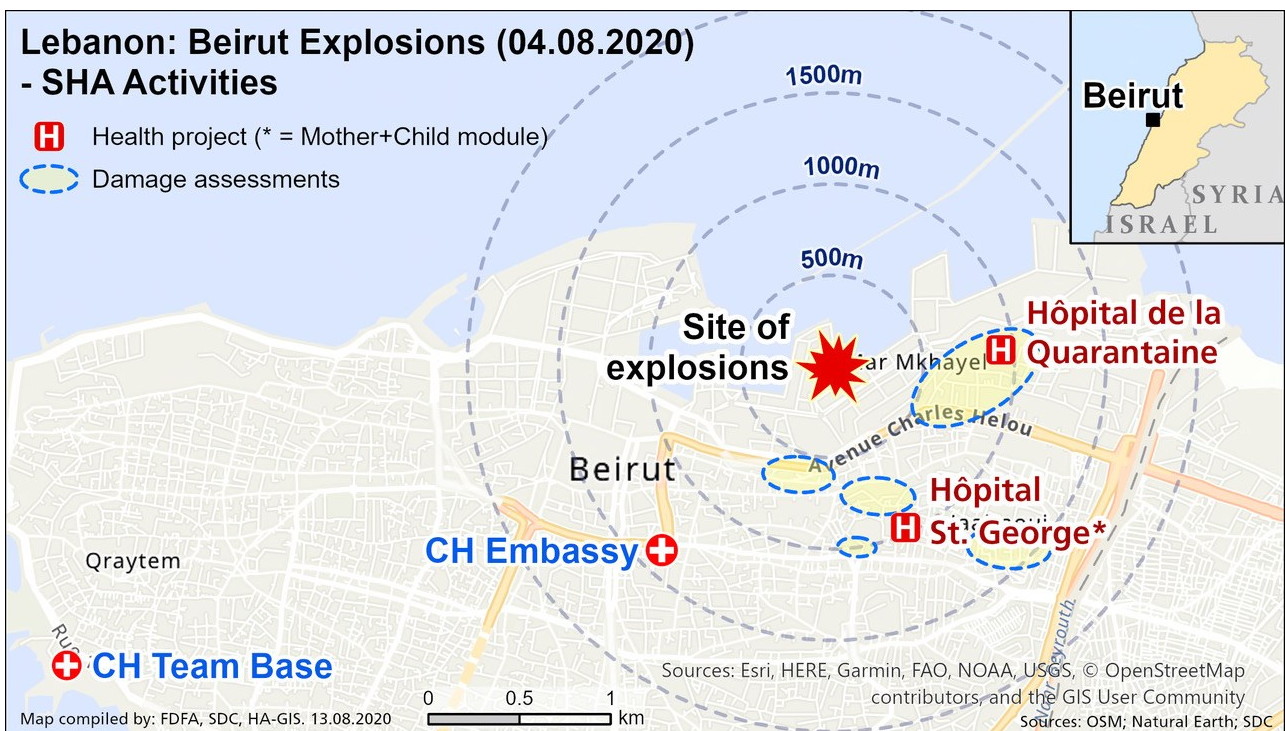
The SDC has sent six additional medical experts as well as 1,500kg material to set up a Mother & Child module at the St. George hospital in Beirut. Under the leadership of a Swiss expert, repair works are currently underway to make sure the hospital can offer medical treatment for the affected population soon. The SDC is also involved in the urgently needed repair works of the “La Quarantaine” hospital which will also provide health services to the ill and injured.

### Education sector

Through the deployment of SHA experts as well as financial contributions, the SDC supports the repairs on 14 public schools in areas that have been heavily affected by the blast. The schools are selected in cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry for Education and Higher Education whereby special attention is given to schools for the lower Lebanese class as well as for Syrian and Palestine refugees. This direct action of the SDC aims at reopening schools by the end of September.

### Financial contribution

In total, the SDC has allocated CHF 4.5 to 5 million to support the affected population of Beirut. CHF 3.5 million are invested in direct actions (CHF 2 million for health and CHF 1.5 to 2 million for education) while the remaining CHF 1 million will be equally distributed to the Lebanese Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



### Further information

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